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ELDER FLOWERS







ELDER FLOWERS

A Collection from the Poems
of
Mrs. Susan B. Elder

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Gift
Margaretta L. Haggard,
May 31, 1912

DEDICATED
TO THE LOVING FRIENDS
WHO HAVE INSISTED UPON PUBLISHING THIS
LITTLE BOOK,
DECKING IT OUT WITH SO MUCH GRACE
AND BEAUTY,
AND WHO HAVE THUS PARTLY COMPENSATED ITS
READERS FOR THE SIMPLE LINES
ENCLOSED WITHIN.

S. B. ELDER.



Sentiment.

MY BRIDAL VEIL.

I took it from its resting place,
My veil of fifty years ago;
I pressed it fondly 'gainst my face,
To feel the old-time rapture glow,
When life was young and love was fair,
And hearts knew not the touch of care.

I held it up against the light,
I shook it free from every fold;
Its silken mesh, once pearly white,
Had slowly changed to threads of gold.
Ah! thus I mused, each grief of time
In heaven will change to joy sublime.

I laid it gently on my head,
To fall in waves of softest gleam;
Beneath its folds the loved ones dead
Came round me as in pleasant dream,
And he who crowned me as his bride
Methought stood radiant at my side.

Oh, Memory! what unfailing power
Is thine to vivify the past—
The perfume of a single flower
Can bring back visions crowding fast.
My veil's soft touch made me once more
A happy bride on Love's bright shore!

The day itself came back to me—
An April day serene and calm,
The cloudless sky an azure sea,
And every breeze was bliss and balm;
No thought of change, of loss, of tears—
Ah! such are God's "eternal years."

One vision more: The church the priest,
Two kneeling forms, a holy prayer,
Low vows that bind the greatest, least,
And death's dread name commingled there;
But Christian hearts know naught of fear,
For God is love, and heaven is near.

When I am laid in coffin-bed,
With tired hands upon my breast,
Place this old veil upon my head
And shroud me in it for my rest.
Its bridal blessing, 'neath the sod,
May plead for me before my God!

And now I'll lay my veil again
Within its old familiar place;
A sigh, a tear, a throb of pain,
For faded youth and vanished grace.
But God can all the past restore,
And give us both our bloom once more!

SYMPATHY.

TO MR. J. J. RANDALL, POET AND FATHER.

A poet's love is tender,
A father's love is strong.
Alas! when falls a shadow,
Such heartstrings quiver long.
Thus all a poet's worship
And all a father's pride
Enshrined the living daughter
Whom Death has claimed as bride.

Her cup of life was brimming
With the wine at Cana blessed,
In her bridal wreath of flowers
Not a single thorn was pressed.
Earth seemed a part of heaven—
Good angels at her side—
Ere yet a twelve-month faded
She in her beauty—died!

The poet, in his anguish,
Looks back to girlhood's days,
Recalls each tone, each gesture,
Of that daughter's gracious ways.

With memory as a painter,
By the magic of his art,
He frames a thousand pictures
In the niches of his heart.

The father, broken-hearted,
Beholds the future's gloom,
In the landscape of affection,
White roses crown a tomb;
And one sad vision tortures
His aching heart and brain;—
A lovely girl-wife dying
On her mother-couch of pain.

Life with death exchanging,—
Antithesis of Fate!
The baby breasts the billows,
The mother opes the gate
Where rest and rapture surely
Are hers forevermore.
The little hapless vessel
May be wrecked on any shore!

O what is Love but losing!
What can we call our own?
Earth's joys are rainbow bubbles—
They shine,—and then are gone!

Why vainly build we castles
Upon Life's shifting sands?
Man's happiness lies only
In the house not made by hands.

O poet! Christian! Father!
Your grief all parents share—
Be yours the strength to bury
Your agony—in prayer.
In all the reach of language,
One thought, and only one,
Can bring the balm of healing,
“My God! Thy will be done.”

THE COTTAGE ON THE HILL.

Oh! what pleasant memories gather
Round that cottage on the hill;—
Through the lapse of time and sorrow,
Bright, methinks, I see it still.

Again I see the roses blushing,
Scent the perfume-laden air,
Feel the breath of loving kindness
Making beauty everywhere!

Again I drink the precious nectar
From out the gushing, gurgling spring,
Hid far down in leafy hollow,
Where the wild birds sweetly sing.

Again I see the orchard, ladened
With all its glorious, tempting fruit:—
The peach trees with their rosy blossoms,
The plum trees in their bridal suit.

And then the vineyard, radiant vineyard!
Where, among its aisles of gloom,
Hung the royal, purple clusters,
All tinted with the sunset's bloom.

But sweeter than the sparkling juices
Pressed from out those clusters rare
Were the kind and generous spirits
Dwelling in the cottage there.

How I loved the beaten pathway
Leading past full many a nook,
Pleasure-filled and Memory-haunted,
Checked at last beside the brook.

Then crossing o'er its shining waters,
Climbing upwards, winding still,
It came at last before the cottage,—
The dear old cottage on the hill.

Along that pathway memory travels,
Bringing back its stores of thought,
Gone with pleasure brightly beaming,
Gone, alas! with anguish fraught.

For memory holds within its keeping
Joys and sorrows blended so
That no one taste is all of sweetness,
And no draught is all of woe.

Within the cottage dwells no longer
The kind and simple-hearted dame,
Who always gave a smile of welcome
To all who urged a stranger's claim.

There her laughing, black-eyed daughter
Sings no more her merry song;
No more respond the mocking singers
From the wild-woods' depth among.

Both are gone—a change has settled
Dark and dreary o'er the place,
Till there's scarcely left a feature,
Its lost identity to trace.

Upon the picture walls of memory
Comes no change on things once bright;
There the cottage crowns the hillside
With all its olden, winsome light.

There the matron and her daughter
Smile as in the days of yore;—
And from memory's walls enchanted
Their dear forms shall fade no more.
And come what may of change or sorrow,
Thoughts like these will linger still,
While fondest recollections gather
Around the cottage on the hill.

CLEOPATRA DYING.

Glorious victim of my magic!
Ruined by my potent spell,
From the world's imperial station
Have I dragged thee down to Hell!
Fallen chieftain! Unthroned monarch!
Lost through doting love for me,
Fast on shades of night eternal
Wings my soul its flight to thee!
Cæsar shall not grace his triumph
With proud Egypt's captive queen,
Soothed to sleep by Aspic kisses,
Soon my heart on thine shall lean;

Soon my life, like lotus-blossoms,
Swift shall glide on Charon's stream;
Clasped once more in thy embraces,
Love shall prove an endless dream.

Iris! Charmian! Bind my tresses,
Place the crown above my brow,
Touch these hands and take these kisses,—
Antony reproves not now!
Gods! my lips breathe poisoned vapors!
They have struck my Charmian dead.
Foolish minion! Durst precede me
Where my spirit's lord has fled?

None shall meet his smile before me,
Smiles for which I barter life;
Gods of Hades! Speed the summons
Which shall ease my bosom's strife.
None shall share his burning kisses
Ere I haste me to his side!
Octavia's tears may prove her widowed,—
Cleopatra's still his bride!

See, my courage claims the title!
Closer pressed the aspic fangs—
Memories of his quickening touches
Sweeten now these deadly pangs!

Honor, manhood, glory's teachings,
All he bartered for my smile!
Twined his heartstrings round my fingers
Vibrant to a touch the while!

Followed fast my silver rudder,
Fled from Cæsar's scornful eye—
Heeded not his bleeding honor—
Glad upon my breast to lie!
Then I snared him in my meshes,
Bound him with my wily art,
From the head of conquering legions
Snatched him captive to my heart!

Wild his soul at my caresses!
Weak his sword at my command!
Rome with fury saw her mightiest
Bowed beneath a woman's hand.
Noblest of the noble Romans!
Greatest of the Emperors three!
Thou didst fling away a kingdom—
Egypt gives herself to thee!

Sweet as balm, most soft and gentle,
Drains the asp my failing breath!
Antony! My Lord! My Lover!
Stretch thine arms to me in death;

Guide me through these fearful shadows!

Faint my heart, and weak my knee—
Glorious victim! Ruined hero!

Cleopatra dies for thee!



Patriotic.



OUR SIBYLLINE LEAVES.

Our Sibylline leaves! Ah, how few are now left
From the Book of our grand Southern story!
Sacred are they, though each page is bereft
Of its color of hope, and its margin of glory.

Our soldiers in gray are our Sibylline leaves,
Once counted by thousands in days that are gone,
Over their passing the Southland now grieves,
But their value augments as the years speed along.

They tell us the story of a nation now dead,
A nation once proud as the Romans of old—
They teach us a lesson the future may dread—
That Right crushed by Might is an anguish untold.

But the anguish is ceasing, the old life upsprings,
Filled with new visions of hopes that must last;
In the South's cheerful chorus no discord now rings,
The peace of the Present hides the pain of the Past.

Bend the head low, stretch kindly each hand,
As the last of our Sibylline leaves now appears.
The price that was paid for that valorous band,
Was measured in blood and was counted in tears.

Fate was the Sibyl who offered each page,
Her hand tore the leaves as she counted the cost,
Those that are left—though all battered by age—
Are dear to our hearts as the land that we lost.

Their record is stainless, their cause true and just,
Neither Logic nor Law ever dared to condemn,
'Twas "the judgment of war" laid that cause in the dust
But it left only honor and glory for them.

What shall we do for our heroes in gray?
What shall we give to our soldiers so true?
Their worth grows apace as time glides away,
But their number, alas! is diminishing, too.

Give them homes, give them hearts, give bountiful aid,
Hang badges of honor on every true breast,
Remember, O Brothers! the price that was paid;
Let it purchase for them Peace, Plenty and Rest.

In the name of the Living, for the sake of the Dead,
Be kind to the few who are left of our Braves!
Soon the South, for whose rights they suffered and bled,
Will hold for them naught but their mem'ries and—
graves!

LAST WORDS OF MAJOR WHEAT.

[These lines were circulated privately during the dark days of 1862, and read recently on the anniversary of the Soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia, in commemoration of one of its heroes.]

“Bury me on the field, Boys!
And away to the glorious fight;
You will come this way again, Boys,
In your triumphant march to-night.
But when you pass this spot, Boys,
I would not have you sigh.
In holy cause of country, Boys,
Who would not gladly die?”

Bury me on the field, Boys,
Where a soldier loves to rest,
And sweet shall be my sleep, Boys,
Upon my country's breast;

For she is dearer, far, Boys!
Than aught this world can give,
And gladly do I die, boys,
That she may proudly live.

“Bury me on the field, Boys!
And away to meet the foe;
Hands that have dug a grave, Boys,
Shall lay their legions low.
Eyes that have wept this morn
Shall smile at close of day, Boys,
For Southern hearts shall triumph
In the Northerners’ dismay.

“Bury me on the field, Boys!”
And then to make a stand
Which shall loose the tyrant’s grip
From our Southern, sunny land,
And teach the invading foe, Boys,
In Freedom’s holy strife,
The Southern heart will sever
The fondest ties of life.

“Bury me on the field, Boys!
I do not die in vain,
For Freedom’s rose shall blossom
From out this bloody rain;
And may the South soon rise, Boys!
All beautiful and fair,
With sunlight rays around her, Boys,
With stars upon her hair!

“Bury me on the field, Boys!
A vision bright and sweet
Is surely sent me, Boys,
In this my own defeat.
Then take my trembling hand, boys—
I thank you for your care—
And let each soldier’s heart, Boys,
Ascend with mine in prayer.

“From the battlefield of Life, Boys,
All wounded, weary, sore,
Pray that my erring soul, Boys,
May reach the Heavenly shore,
And in that land of mercy
The weary may find rest,—
And a poor, repentant soldier, Boys,
Find refuge ’mong the blest.”

"NOBLY DONE."



They faltered for a moment there, those men of iron
nerve,
For, drawing close around their lines, in one gigantic
curve,
The foe swept like a torrent wild, from mountain rill
set free;
Then quailed, alas! the bravest heart, then shook the
stoutest knee.
In roar, on flank, from every side, those waves of battle
came,
Encircling stern, devoted hearts, with streams of lurid
flame.
Engulphing 'neath its tide of blood the best and bravest
there.
And filling souls that struggled on with dread and wild
despair—
From bright and early dawn of day they'd nobly held
their post,
And oh! 'twas hard indeed to feel their labor had been
lost,
Their wounds and blood and bitter pain had been of
no avail:

Must they be trampled down at last like leaves before
the gale?

Must they succumb to might and wrong, be conquered
in the strife,

Yield all they hold most dear on earth—their country,
honor, life?

Ah, no! Hay's gallant, dauntless braves have heard
the glad command,

And back they fall with rapid step to make another
stand:

Their hands are firm as faith itself, their hearts un-
touched by fear,

And loudly do they hail the words, "Halt, boys, we'll
fight them here!"

With burning words they rally fast, loud cheering as
they go,

Defiant form their battle-line, with faces to the foe,
And gaze upon the panic'round, in silence and in scorn;
For life to them is little worth if liberty be gone!

And there they stood, and sternly fought, as freemen
ever fight,

Winning the day so nearly lost, and conquering force
by right,

And while loved comrades fall around, they check af-
fection's moan,

The only funeral rites, the words, "He now is glory's
own!"

Or bending o'er a brother dead, conceal the pallid face,
And mark, for some lone mother's sake, his lowly resting
place;

Or crowd around the lifeless forms of men, like Menger
brave,

Resolved the foe who took his life shall not profane his
grave.

No wonder that our fearless chief rode up, with kind-
ling eye,

Eager to know "What troops are these" who thus can
dare and die?

"Hay's first brigade!" a soldier said, his pale cheek
flushed with pride,

For memories of his sunny home rushed o'er him like
a tide;

But see, the Chieftain lifts his hand, and in low tones,
that thrill

Through every gallant heart that death has left uncon-
quered still,

With brow uncovered and illumed by morning's glorious
sun,

Repeats, with solemn, earnest voice, "O, nobly, nobly done!"

That day saw deeds of noblest fame, heard cries of grief and woe,

For every arm, uplifted there, laid some vile tyrant low,
And when the sun went slowly down, their record beamed the same,

Far they had "nobly done" their part for freedom and for fame.

And is not this just tribute due, sweet land of orange-flowers,

To every gallant son of thine, in this dread strife of ours?

For who can count their noble deeds, or tell their battles won!

Their record fell from truest lips when he said "Nobly done!"

See Marye's heights, when five brigades essayed, and all in vain,

To check the fearful tide of blood that flowed across the plain:

But through it all, thy gallants sons pushed madly, gladly on,

They stormed the hill, they gained the crest, and
Marye's heights was won!
And thus, o'er every hill and plain, those dauntless
sons of thine
Have poured their blood, an offering free, on Freedom's
holy shrine;
They poured it forth with loving joy, nor asked for
other boon,
Than that dear land so fondly loved, should rise from
bondage soon,
Should rise to love and venerate each lost and living
son,
And cherish with maternal pride, the praise their valor
won.
Oh, yes, Louisiana loved! thy sons have set thy name
Adorned with glory's brightest beam, in proudest niche
of fame;
And those who died to make thee free, and those who
live to bless,
Shall share alike thy grateful love in days of happiness.
Behold their gravestones scattered wide among the
martyr dead!
O, "nobly done" shall be inscribed above each honored
head;

Behold them exiled o'er the land, all pallid, crippled
sore!

Ah! "nobly done" shall be the balm poured all their
bruises o'er;

For they have won a wreath for thee, as fadeless as the
sun,

And God will yet redeem the land whose sons have
"nobly done!"

Selma, Ala., March, 1865.

Miscellaneous

WHERE IS PEARL RIVERS?

Where is Pearl Rivers? Our bird of the wildwood!
Where has the minstrel of melody flown?
Like the hermit of old, who was charmed in the forest,
We have listened, entranced, to her ravishing tone!
Where is Pearl Rivers? The sweet mocking singer!
Whose warblings are fresh as the dew of the morn,
Whose fancies are pure as the bright orange-blossom
When first it unfolds at the touch of the dawn!
Where is Pearl Rivers? The priestess of nature!
Who wears on her forehead the blossoms of spring.
Who sings at the altar such exquisite anthems,
That still in our hearts their sweet cadences ring!
Where is Pearl Rivers? We long for the music
That gushed from a heart in its purity rare,
That echoed the sounds of the woodland and streamlet,
Of everything dainty, and tender and fair!
Where is Pearl Rivers? She must not foresake us;
We pine for her marvelous musical strain;
Sweet bird of the wildwood, bright pearl of the river.
Oh! say, shall we hear her soft warblings again?

TO MISSES FERGUSON AND WHITE.

We are told, dear friends, in song and story,
Life is gloom, defeat, and tears—
Yet see, to-day there shines a glory
Which lights up five and twenty years!
Five and twenty years of grand endeavor
To brighten minds and give them joy forever.

Your lives, dear friends, refute the saying
“Call no man happy till he dies.”
The rays of joy around you playing
Shine out from radiant, star-lit eyes,
Proclaiming happiness is found in duty,
That work well done is Art, is Truth, is Beauty.

Those years of teaching, watching, tending,
Can ought be drearier, duller toil?
Can any sacrifice above them bending
Bring blossoms from a barren soil?
Yet Love, Hope, Patience, all sublime,
Have snatched rich harvests from the grasps of time!

Look back upon the pathway closing
Those years of tender toil and care,

Full many a rose 'mid thorns reposing
Will smile upon your glances there,
And e'en the thorns have memories sweet and tender,
Lifting your souls to Him, their gracious Sender.

No, life is not one sound of wailing,
When hearts are true to God and man.
There is no fault e'en in our failing,
If we but do the best we can.
If conscience speaks in tones of gladness,
Our hearts shall never feel one throb of sadness.

And such, dear friends is your bright story
As we review those years now past,
Its light is not a transient glory,
'Twill shine unsullied to the last.

E'en as the rainbow lifts its promise spoken,
So shall your names reflect Fidelity unbroken.

To-day—the present with the past thus meeting—
Crowns your true lives with silvery rays.
It is a Jubilee, a triumph greeting—

The victors' song with wreaths of bays!
And we could wish our words in fullest measure.
Had Midas-touch to yield you golden treasure.
May health, and best appreciation,
Be yours until the close of life,

May this, our fond congratulation,
But spur you on to nobler strife,
To holier zeal in this your grand endeavor
To brighten minds, and make them blest forever!

May future years all gently flowing,
Uplift you high on Fortune's tide;
May all the seeds your hands are sowing,
Yield rich fruition, far and wide.
May your true worth and noble self denial
Win heavenly crowns for every earthly trial.

Jubilee of { MISS I. D. FERGUSON.
MISS HANNAH WHITE.

LIEUTENANT J. N. AUGUSTIN, U. S. A.

Only Louisianian Killed in the Spanish War, 1898.

Bright in the bloom of his beautiful manhood,
Proud of his name and its unsullied past,
He sprang to the front with the ardor of childhood,
When the summons to arms rang full on the blast.

What were father or mother, what were home or sweet
wife,
To the rapturous joy which his gallant heart knew,

When the hope of his youth, the one dream of his life,—
Though shadowed by blood,—rose fair on his view?

Five years a soldier! 'Twas a pathway of flowers;—
With happiness, hope, all his sky was aflame;
But often his heart in its happiest hours,
Yearned for a chance to win glory and fame.

Wedded two years! Ah, life was too fair,
Too full of affection, contentment, repose;
He longed in the struggle of battle to share,
To lead his brave men in the face of their foes.

"Dearest father, I go!" was his jubilant cry
When ordered at last to the red field of strife.
"You will hear from me soon, if I live. If I die,—
But God knoweth best!—take care of my wife!"

On that sad Cuban shore, on that hillside of fire,
Beneath that dread hailstorm of bullet and shell,—
With a smile on his face, with his sword pointing higher,
With his young heart distilling its life-blood, he fell!

Fell as he wished, in the forefront of battle,
Winning applause for his country and name.
When trumpets of Peace silence War's dreadful rattle,
In hundreds of hearts will re-echo his fame!

For he was our hero,—our State's only son
Who gave up his life while opposing the foe.
His name on the roll-call of honor has won
A lustre which ever in brightness will grow.

What is Life! What is Love! Ah, we only can weep
O'er the dauntless young heart laid so early to rest,
But our Southland his memory will sacredly keep,
And whisper his name 'mong her noblest and best.

THE KNEELING GIRL.

[SUGGESTED BY A PHOTOGRAPH.]

Maiden! on the banks of childhood,
With the sea of life before—
Kneelest thou to ask for guidance,
Ere thou sailest from its shore?

Are those white hands clasp'd in pleading
For a succor all divine,
Lest thy bark should lose its bearings
When the waters round thee shine?

Tempting thee with sounds of music
On towards those golden strands
Where Pleasure stills the voice of Duty,
And Virtue yields to Sin's commands?

Have those dark eyes read the future,
And knowing, dost thou dread the gale,
Which thy woman's heart must weather,
Tho' torn and rent each quivering sail?

Ah! didst thou know the snares and dangers
That await thee on Life's main,
Then thy soul would shrink with terror,
And thy young heart ache with pain!

Thou wouldst kneel with tearful glances
To implore the gracious boon,
That never o'er the morn of childhood
Might rise the glare of sorrow's noon:

Thou wouldst pray, with 'twined fingers,
On thy mother's breast to stay,
Till the waves of Time should sparkle
'Neath the light of endless day.

But, fear not thou the sea before thee,
Nor weep when fade the shores of youth,
For thou may'st bear upon thy voyage
Its buds of promise, gems of truth.

Then be thou brave! pure-hearted maiden,
And launch thee on Life's stormy wave;
Past phantom lights and darksome places,
The hand of Faith can guide and save.

No storm can wreck the stainless hearted,
No billow crush the strong of soul—
Be thine this strength and purity,
And thou shalt reach the sun-lit goal!

CHAINS.

[Just after the close of the Civil War a strange fashion was seen in New Orleans—the wearing of heavy black chains on arms and necks of Southern women.]

Chains on a Southern woman! Chains!

Base badges of defeat!

What hand has dared to place them there,
Binding your folds of flowing hair,—
Coiling like snakes o'er your bosom fair
A strange and foul conceit!

Chains on a Southern woman! Chains!

Vile types of blackest shame!

Worn in the light of the noonday sun,
Worn in the sight of the men who won
Their foes' respect when hope was gone—
Though not their deathless fame.

Chains on a Southern woman! Chains!

Infamy's fittest brand!

Hung over hearts that once throbbed high,
In those better days, long since gone by,
When you sent your loved ones forth to die
For cherished Motherland!

Chains on a Southern woman! Chains!
 Black emblem of disgrace!
Ye may cease to mourn for glories fled,
Ye may hush your sighs for a cause now dead,
But ye should not wear without blushes red
 The badge of a servile race!

Chains on a Southern woman! Chains!
 Submission flaunted wide,
Fling them away from your scornful sight,
Loosen their fangs from your bosoms bright,
Unclasp their links from your arms so white,
 Trample them down with pride!

Chains on a Southern woman! Chains!
 Away with the clanking things!
They tell the tale of a fortress strong,
Where was done a deed of the darkest wrong,
And a Captive's heart was tortured long,
 By the sound of their iron rings.

Chains on a Southern woman! Chains!
 Away with the livery base!
If ye be conquered, are ye cast down?

Need wear a chain, though lost your crown?
Nay, lift your heads with your past renown,
And walk in unfettered grace!

Chains on a Southern woman! Chains!
Away with the badge untrue!
Ye wrong the memory of the slain!
Ye torture brave, living hearts with pain!
On Southern valor ye cast a stain
Your foemen would scorn to do!

Chains on a Southern woman! Chains!
Down with the slavish crest!
Think of the hands now still and cold,
Chainless and free 'neath the earth's damp mold,—
And twine no fetters of iron, nor gold,
O'er hearts where their memories rest!

MARY—OUR BABY.

TENDERLY INSCRIBED TO MR. AND MRS. T. F.

She has passed beyond this world of ours,
Crowned with the name of Heaven's own Queen.
Safe throned on high among Mary's flowers,
The wee white rose of your heart is seen.

Ye have lost the blossom whose sweet perfume,
Threw a holy spell over heart and home;
Ye have lost the bud o'er whose tender bloom
No stain or blight of this world had come.

She has gained a beauty immortal, bright,
In the realms of fadeless, perfect joy,
She has won a glory whose golden light
Neither time nor change can e'er destroy.
Ye mourn for the first fair blossom given
To charm your lives in this vale below;
The first bright joy which a gracious Heaven
In mercy did on your lives bestow.

She smiles from her throne of crystal rays
On your anguished tears and your bitter pain,
And joining her voice to the Seraph's praise
Dreams not of earth nor its thorns again.
She hears your grieving and sees your tears,
Yet feels no thrill of regret or pain—
For our human hopes and human fears
No discord make in Heaven's refrain.

Then weep not for your stainless flower,
Nor think it rests 'neath the dewy sod—
With glory crowned, in our Lady's bower,
It lives and blooms 'neath the smiles of God!

Then lift your souls in this Christmas time
In prayer and praise to the Triune-One,
Who called your rose from our darksome clime
To bloom in the wreath of His Infant Son.

MAMMY'S GRIEVING.

IN 1862.

My dear young Massa's gone to war,
Gone from Missus, home and me,
And oh! it makes my heart so sore
To think how long a time t'will be
Before I see his handsome face
A peeping in my cabin door.
Dis old home and all dis place,
Gwine to miss him more and more.

He looked most fine in sojer-clothes,
Brass buttons shining on his breast,
But I would rather, goodness knows,
Have seen him far more plainly dressed
In flannel shirt and cottonade,
Like when he was a little boy,
Who came to Mammy when he played,
To crack his whip, or mend his toy.

He came to me afore he left,
Just after kissing Missus dear;
My poor old heart done so bereft,
I couldn't shed a single tear.
He took my old, black hand in his,
He laid his cheek against my own—
O Heavenly Marster! think of this,
When he's in danger and alone!

I know he felt the parting, too,
Although he smiled and 'peared so gay,
And when the old house was out of view
I'm sho' he wiped some tears away.
He held old Missus close and long,
Like if that minute was his last;
Ah, me! young Massa, young and strong,
But Missus' old and failing fast.

Well, I must try, for Missus' sake,
To put a pleasant, bright face on.
He said that day: "Oh, Mammy, take
Good care of Mother when I'm gone."
And so I will, my honey son,—
Old Mammy'll do the bes' she can,
Then leave the rest to Him above,
For that's, they say, the surest plan.

I go sometimes into his room,
To smoothe the pillows, fix the bed;
But, my! The place 'pears all in gloom,
Like if my honey-boy was dead!
His nice white shirts are on the shelf,
His fancy shoes, his beaver tall,—
Ah, my! I wish his own sweet self
Was only here to wear them all.

I found his picture t'other day,
With Missus' prayer-book on a chair.
I know she always lets it stay
Beside her when she says her prayer.
It made me glad to see his face,
With its same old, mischief smile,
But when I left it in its place
I couldn't help but cry awhile.

But, mercy me! I'm talking yet
About that darling, honey son.
I nussed him once! I can't forget
The many things we both have done.
Well, I must go—I hope he's well,
I know he's brave as brave can be—
Oh! I'll be glad when he comes back,—
Comes back to Missus, home, and me!

WHO IS HE?

Sole Survivor of the Singers,
Who sang the Southland's fame,
Among her brightest poets
Will ever shine his name.
We see him sad and silent
'Mid the memories of the Past,
Yet the Land he fondly cherished
Is glory-crowned at last.

Ah, yes! True songs are deathless,
But the Singer we forget:—
We leave him 'mid the shadows
With slight feeling of regret.
While his melodies are ringing
Around the homes of earth,
Time sends no echoes cheering
His lonely heart and hearth.

O, daughters of the Southland,
With hearts so true and brave,
Are ye waiting for your garlands
To be laid upon his grave?

Should not the Living be remembered,
With the courteous word and deed?
Is not the throbbing heart a-hungry
For a sign of hope, at need?

Men's lives are full of worry,
Men's hearts are full of care:—
Yet nobly would they rally
Came a challenge on the air,—
To lift from pale oblivion
A Singer whose bright star
Went down in sudden darkness,
Beneath the cloud of war!

One noble-hearted woman
(Be her name forever blest!)
Gave the South's neglected Chieftain
A home wherein to rest.
Without her grand Remembrance
His life were dark indeed.
Hers was the Thought that blossomed
While others paid no heed!

O would some gifted woman
 Could win the Southland's hearts
To cheer our Southern Singer
 Ere the tide of life departs!
Then kindred souls would hasten
 To form a willing throng:—
To her should be the glory!
 To us his grateful Song!

Among the South's proud sisters,
 One name among the Band,
Makes Southern hearts leap wildly
 At the call of—Maryland!
From out her fair dominion,—
 Because he loved her fame,
Should come the grateful laurels
 To crown his honored name.

Yes, prize the South's last Singer—
 He lives enrolled in fame,
But his days are overshadowed;
 Friends so few remain!
The hopes of youth are blighted,
 The joys of manhood few—
For the heart-songs he has written
 The Southland's thanks are due.

DIRGE

TO J. R. RANDALL, AUTHOR OF "MARYLAND, MY MARYLAND!"

Mourn for thy patriot son,

Maryland!

His work of love for thee is done,

Maryland!

He dowered thee with endless fame,

He crowned with light thy beauteous name,

His cold dead lips still seem to claim

Honors for thee,—his Maryland!

He fired the hearts of Southern youth,

Maryland!

To strike for what he deemed was truth,

Maryland!

Around that thought his heartstrings clung,

For this his sweetest songs were sung,

Yet ever mind and hand and tongue

Were true to thee,—his Maryland!

Methinks a low and tender wail

Maryland!

Floats out from many a hill and dale,

Maryland!

"The Southland's singer is no more"—

Thus sounds the dirge re-echoed o'er
From New Orleans to Baltimore,
E'en to thy heart,—his Maryland!

Ah, few who knew his life's sad story,
Maryland!

Half in gloom and half in glory,
Maryland!

Dark days galore were his to see,
Fate brought "one day in Arcadie,"
When friends poured homage, full and free,
'Twas shared with thee,—his Maryland!

His was the knightly heart of old,
Maryland!

Its honor was not weighed with gold,
Maryland!

He kept his vows—God first of all!
His country next! Then Love's sweet call
Found him equipped on foe to fall—
His laurels thine,—his Maryland!

He could not bend his upright soul,
Maryland!
To make it fit life's sordid mold,
Maryland!
He knew not how to snatch success,
From woman's woe or man's distress;—
'Twas joy for him one soul to bless
And sing for thee,—his Maryland!

He yearned upon thy lap to rest,
Maryland!
He craved a pillow on thy breast,
Maryland!
To toil for thee were joy and pride,
But all his longings were denied,—
Not even in thy arms he died,—
But far from thee,—his Maryland!

His name, his song, his pure renown,
Maryland!
Will ever be thy fairest crown,
Maryland!
No other land has name like thine,
He pledged it in a blood-red wine,
And Music, Poesie combine
To make thee great,—his Maryland!

His muse has left its casket here,
Maryland!
Drop tears and garlands on his bier,
Maryland!
In life he struggled for his bread,
As poets do, but Genius dead
Awakes a heart-throb which will spread
And crown him for his Maryland.

CHATEAUX EN ESPAGNE.

AFTER THE CIVIL WAR.

Our Spanish castles are proud and high,
With lofty spires and glittering domes;
We may often see in the western sky
The burnished roofs of those stately homes,
With their crimson banners flung out to cheer
Our weary hearts in their sorrows here.
All that was lost in days now gone,
Is treasured up in our castle fair,
Our faded crown, and our fallen throne,
Our past renown and our valor rare,
Our ruined hopes and our vanished dreams
Take lasting shapes and unfading gleams!

Our gallant dead are restored to life
By the balmy air of that Spanish land;
Not ghastly pale from their glorious strife,
But laurel-crowned in those halls they stand;
While fretted ceiling and frescoed arch
Resound with the notes of their triumph-march.

The plighted vows of the Bridal day,
The face shut down 'neath the coffin-lid,
The golden tint of the hair now gray,
Are all in our Spanish caskets hid,
With the generous hopes of our boyhood's time,
With the nobler deeds of our manhood's prime.

The Future is dismal. Its clouds hang low
Darkening the present with shadows of gloom,
But over our Spanish possessions we know
There's a golden glow and a tender bloom,
And a halo of beauty surpassingly bright,
In whose presence there enters no clouds of the
night.

While sorrow and shame, with want and dismay,
Now darken the South in her valleys so fair,
Her children all know they have lands far away—

They are owners of stately proud "Castles
in Air,"
Which they never can lose by tyrannical power
And where Hope smiles serene thro' the gloom-
iest hour.

"PRAY EXCUSE ME."

LAST WORDS OF JEFFERSON DAVIS.

Oh, great, true heart! these gentle, courteous
words,
Addressed to friends about thy dying bed,
Proclaim a message clear as songs of birds,
Which well may reach the living from the
dead.

O, world of hate! who scoff above his bier,
Heed ye the message, gentle yet so strong:
He sought the Right,—unmoved by love or
fear,
Excuse him that he could not bow to
wrong!

O, world of love! who mourn him near and
far,
Enshrine his message in each loyal soul
Though needed not. His memory like a star
Shines ever on toward Honor's brightest
goal.

O, kingly soul! O, silent, knightly lips
Which plead to be excused for work well
done,—
Ye still attest—in spite of Death's eclipse—
The Southland's chieftain was her hum-
blest son!

MRS. JEFFERSON DAVIS' VISIT TO NEW
ORLEANS IN 1866.

Honored lady! In thy gentle mien
We mark that noble grace and pride,
Which well befitted thee when thou wert seen,
In graceful beauty at his side,
Who ruled a nation with a purpose great,—
Nor felt that purpose was opposed to Fate.

We welcome thee, dear lady, once again,
To scenes that surely waken grief;
But if true sympathy can soften pain,
Or yield a balm of glad relief,
Then every heart re-echoes here,
Thy every hope, and prayer, and awful fear!

With thee we hope that time may soon lead forth
Our loved one from his prison cell,
Among the valleys of his loyal South,
In happy peacefulness to dwell,
Where Memory shining proudly from the past,
Shall round his path a golden radiance cast.

With thee we fear—Alas! how name the fear
That makes the pleading cry rise up:—
O Father! keep thy guardian angels near
To turn aside the fatal cup,
And bring instead joy's vintage to his heart,
Who bears of Southland cross the heaviest part.

Yes, lady! thine our hope, and fear, and prayer,
Our every thought turns lovingly
To that brave heart unjustly doomed to bear
A cruel, sad captivity!
Repining not—but trusting all to Him
Who o'er his lot has cast these shadows dim.

Then, lady! though our tears in unison
Flow softly o'er our Chieftain's fate,
We still will trust that Heaven's bright benison
May ever on his footsteps wait,
And every dart of cruel fate beguile
By thy dear love and Freedom's holy smile!

Home.

APRIL 19, 1855—1905.

My Golden Jubilee? Ah, no!

Death's sombre hue enshrouds my life;
The bride of fifty years ago
Is now a widow, not a wife.

My Jubilee? Nay, nay, dear friends,

A white tomb rises on my sight,
Its silence, linked to memory, blends
The grief with joy, the dark with light.

My Jubilee? How can that be?

That word means Life's most raptuous call,
A song of joy—of victory—
Not one discordant note through all.

My Jubilee? Can I be glad

When memories o'er my heartstrings play?
Henceforth Life's music must be sad,
Its harmony has passed away.

My Jubilee? Alas! 'tis well
To be content with weal or woe!
No bridal bell will ever tell
Which one must stay—which one must go.

* * * * *

Stern reason asks if it be right
To steep the soul in thoughts of gloom?
Wise Nature decks with flowers and light
The lowly grave—the stately tomb.

My heart is sad! Yet why repine?
Heaven is brighter far than earth,
And he who entered joys divine
Knew human joys were little worth.

Mine eyes were blind! A golden light
Has streamed along these fifty years;
My life has known more day than night,
More happy smiles than bitter tears.

A hymn of joy? Ah, yes, 'tis true;
My path is filled with blessings rare;
My children's love, like heavenly dew,
Makes joys to blossom everywhere.

My tears will fall, but grieving ends.

God's mercies crowd along my way:—
Health, comfort, peace, devoted friends,
Who shower new blessings, day by day.

* * * * *

My Jubilee! Ah, yes, I see
God's ways are always kind and best.
His wisdom laid the cross on me,
His mercy gave my loved one—rest.

My Jubilee!—though incomplete
It brings a sense of trust and cheer;
Not here our wedded hearts may meet
Yet Faith can draw them very near!

My Jubilee! What joys unfold!
It is a day of praise and prayer;
My lost one lives in bliss untold,—
I wait in hope to meet him there.

My Jubilee! Not mine alone,—
Transfigured by a light divine,
Its radiance falls from heaven's throne
And wraps in peace this heart of mine.

My Jubilee! Yes, come it will,
When time and earth have passed away.
In realms where angels' voices thrill,
I'll find—my golden wedding day!

MY JULIE! MINE!

'Twas thus I called her in my hour of pain,
Looking my last upon her coffin'd face;
I could not feel my loss had been her gain—
My dark despair, her boon of brightest grace.

My Julie! Just a few bright months before,
She stood a bride before my loving gaze.
The rapture-look her gentle features wore,
Recalled a dream of Eden's earliest days.

My Julie! Oh, then fell the cruel blow
That reached her life upon her bridal ride!
Bruised, broken, crushed—Ah, me! the woe!
And not one conscious look before she died!

My Julie! Mine! I wailed aloud,

Why didst thou yield to death's command?

Why didst thou change white robe for ghastly
shroud?

Why pass without one pressure of the hand?

My Julie! why didst leave this world so fair,

While wedded love was yet a rose in bloom,

Relentless death but snatched thee from our care,
To give thee silence, solitude and gloom!

Then spoke a voice, my anguish to beguile:—

“She was not yours, nor mine, nor any man's,

God lent her to us for a little while,—

Her death was part of His eternal plans.”

* * * * *

My heart stood still! I had forgotten God!

I had forgotten heaven—its peace and rest,

I thought of her, alone, beneath the sod,

With eyelids closed, white hands upon her breast.

I had forgotten faith, and hope, and prayer,

I had forgotten the angelic throng.

I only knew that human love seemed fair,

And all earth vibrant to her wedding song.

My Julie! I have learned since then to know
That God's decree is always true and kind.
He pours a balm for every human woe,
He sends a rose for every thorn entwined.

He took my loved one to His fond embrace,
To shield her from life's varying storm:—
He sent an angel friend to fill her place,
And keep this faithless heart forever warm.

My God, forgive! naught, naught is mine,
Save my poor sins—alas! so manifold!
Make all I love and prize, forever thine—
What is earth's dross compared to heaven's gold?

FOOTSTEPS.

I have lit the lamp my darling, and am waiting for
thee now,
With the evening work beside me—and the hair laid
from my brow;

I have placed thy slippers ready, and thy armchair
near my own,
And am listening for thy footstep, and thy earnest
loving tone.

I hear a sound, a footstep; but 'tis a heavy one and
slow,
As if the heart above it was weary with its weight
of woe,
And the spirit feeble, fearing, longing for the peace-
ful shore,
Knew there was a toilsome journey which it first
must travel o'er.

Another sound approaches; 'tis a dull and reeling
tread,
As if the reason that should guide it was powerless
or dead.
Oh! God protect the helpless wife—with Thy al-
mighty power—
Who watches for that fearful step in this calm holy
hour.

Again I hear dull footsteps, which weak and waver-
ingly come;
'Tis a mother and her orphan babe returning to
their home.

She, with weary widowed heart, has been toiling for
her boy!

While I—Sweet Jesus make me grateful for the
blessings I enjoy.

Now gentle steps are nearing, and whisper'd words
float on the air

Telling of a lover's pleading, and the answer to the
prayer,

While my soul goes out in blessings for that maiden's
future years

Which God grant may never know the agony of
widow's tears.

Hark! now a light and joyous step falls on my list'n-
ing ear,

And my heart leaps up in gladness, for my husband's
voice I hear,

A moment longer and his love-smile blesses now my
sight!

Oh, would that equal happiness befell each watcher
this glad night.

THE MOTHER'S ROUND.

Each night, when Sleep in fond embrace
The children's forms has gently bound,
The mother seeks their resting place,
And makes her loving, noiseless round
Passing from bed to bed with watchful care,
For each in mother-love hath equal share!

A precious burden to her life!
A cherished care by night and day!
Yet through the dreary years of strife
She wearies not nor turns away;
Hoping that when the pain and work are past
Their hands may bring her joy and rest at last!

She bends above her baby's nest,
The birdling of the household band—
And feels that o'er that sinless rest
Is spread, unseen, an angel's hand,
Ready to claim for Heaven's resplendent throne
The darling child she thinks is all her own.

She stands beside her only son,
The boy who bears his father's name—
And prays that while their names are one
Their virtues, too, may be the same.
Yet sighs to think how manhood's distant years
May try his heart and wring her own with fears!

Beside her daughter's couch she kneels,
Her eldest, wisest, gentlest, best!
Ah! well, in later years, she feels
Those eyes shall watch above her rest,
Those hands, so small and helpless now, shall cheer
Her own dark night when age and grief draw near!

And now she thinks of other beds
That need no mother's tender care—
The weeping willow only spreads
Its mournful arms in silence there,
But Faith still murmurs, while the sad tears fall,
“Deny not Him a part who gave thee all!”

Her thoughts go thence to other homes
All dreary, desolate, and bare,
Beside whose beds no kind face comes
To watch the children sleeping there,

No prayer is said, no token ever given
To teach their hearts that God looks down from
Heaven!

Such fancies thrill her heart with love
To Him who makes her home so bright,
Who, bending from His throne above,
Defends and guards it day and night;
And turning now to seek her needed rest
She knows whose care is truest, surest, best!

"Oh, bless them all," she softly cries,
"The children Thou hast lent to me,
And with my angels in the skies
Unite them through eternity,
Recalling them, when Death's dark night shall come,
From mother's arms, dear Father, to Thy home!"

A YOUNG WIDOW.

So young and fair, and yet a widow!
Although the grass has grown five years,
Above the grave of him she honors
Still with fond and faithful tears!

The bloom of life is still upon her,
Sleeps its sunshine in her eyes,
While a magic grace that charms you,
Like a crown upon her lies.

Still she walks the world unheeding
All its witchery and charms; —
One sweet memory in her bosom,
One bright gift within her arms.

Will she cease her tender grieving?
Will she dry her loving tears?
And let another brighter bridal
Bring her joy in future years?

Who can tell? The heart is precious;
It may not lightly turn aside,
From memories of the one departed,
To be another's joyous bride.

She is not lonely—God has blessed her
With life's burden and Love's care.
This shall fill her hands with labor,
Fill her earnest heart with prayer.

Then whate'er the years may bring her,
Be God's peace upon her brow;—
With widow's cap, or wedding favor,
Be her heart **as true as now!**

LINES WRITTEN UNDER A BRIDAL-BELL.

Bridal bells! Bridal bells!
Do you think their music tells
Of hope and trust, of joy and youth,
Knowing naught of change—ah, never,
Ringing clear and sweeter ever,
One long tune of love and truth?

Bridal bells! Bridal bells!
Ah, how soon their music swells
Into groans from aching breast,
Into sighs above a grave,
Where rare roses sadly wave
Over heart and hand at rest!

Bridal bells! Bridal bells!
They will later change to knells,
Funeral knells for one who goes;—
For every bridal means a tomb,
Widowhood and cypress gloom.
Which goes first? Ah, who knows!

THE SOUVENIR.

TO MY DAUGHTER, M. T. E.

Come hither, little daughter, and let me clasp this
charm,
This rich and radiant bracelet, upon thy dimpled
arm.
Nay, look not so coquettish; 'this not to make thee
vain;
Thy mother decks thee, darling, with a golden, glit-
tering chain.

But to bind unto thy spirit the loveliness and worth
Of her who wore this jewel ere she glided out of
earth,

And the memory of whose virtues forevermore shall
dwell,
Like lights upon an altar, in the hearts she loved
so well.

It is her mother, darling, who sends my daughter
this,
Bidding her resemble that dear one now in bliss:
And to her earnest pleading, thy mother joins her
prayer
That grace may keep thee innocent, and virtue
make thee fair.

Be ever pure and gentle, with heart and hand replete
With blessings for the lowly that cluster 'round thy
feet:
Give courage to the weary; lift up the sinking form
Left helpless in the struggle against Temptation's
storm.

Like hers, be thine the beauty that with it ever
brings
A sense of holiest virtues, a dream of heavenly
things,

As though her Guardian Angel, with tender, loving
 grace,
Dropt from his wings a splendor to light her form
 and face.

I pray thou mayest be like her in all the graces
 rare,
Which made her mind so lovely, and her angel face
 so fair.

May peace attend thy footsteps, and Love his roses
 shed,
Without one thorn of anguish around thy golden
 head.

And now, dear one, thou knowest 'tis not to make
 thee vain

Thy mother decks thee, darling, with a golden, glit-
 tering chain,

But to bind unto thy spirit the loveliness and worth
Of her who wore this jewel ere she glided out of
 earth.

Fond hearts were left in sorrow, and a home in
 deepest gloom,

For the flowers of her bridal lent a beauty to her
 tomb.

She faded in her springtime, when life was full of bliss.

I pray thou mayest be like her, but **I cannot ask for this.**

A BABY—DEAD!

A babe asleep! with one wee white rose
Closely pressed in its waxen fingers!
Over brow and cheek, a strange light glows!
On parted lips, a sweet smile lingers!

Why do we shrink from this vision fair?
Why are our bosoms so wildly throbbing?
Why do we wail in such deep despair,
While our hearts are weary with bitter sobbing?

He was our all! Life's one sweet joy!
The only gem in Love's casket gleaming.
We saw no cloud 'neath his sunny brow,
We knew no fears in our blissful dreaming!

All, all is o'er! Our hope is fled!
Our Joy, our Pride, in anguish stifled!
The one sweet blossom we loved—is dead!
Our jewel from out its casket rifled!

Then let us weep while we kiss the rod,
Our Father's hand o'er our hearts is keeping!
But let us kneel—at the feet of God—
And know in His arms our child is sleeping!

Yes, let us weep—our tears are balm,
The bitter pain of our hearts relieving!
But let us pray, for souls grow calm,
If God be with them in their grieving!

THE PASSING OF MAMMY.

I received to-day a letter
Which has caused me many a tear.
It said: Old Mammy is no better;
Death, it seems, is very near.
Ah! I knew the years were telling
On the dear, old, faithful soul,
Yet hoped that Death would not be spelling
Her name so soon upon his roll.

Dear old Mammy! Few are living
Of her glorious type to-day;
Hands the finest service giving
Hearts where sunshine seemed to play.

We seldom see on dusky faces
That look of truth, devotion, pride,
That fealty to friends and places,
Old-fashioned virtues that—have died!

Instead a look of grim defiance,
As though this world gave only hate,—
Learning, knowledge, higher science
Have added bitterness to Fate.
A penstroke broke up slavery truly,
It held some bright points of view—
There were cruel masters, surely—
There are cruel husbands, too!

Freedom in slower, wiser measure,
Would have blessed the South ere long.
Time would but enhance the treasure
And cut the Gordian knot of wrong.
I can see with Memory's vision
Old Mammy's "tignon," once her pride,
Folded with such fine precision,
Forming rosettes on the side!
Beneath its folds, in kindness gleaming,
A pair of honest, watchful eyes.
A smile with fond affection beaming
Which ease the heart and hush its sigh.

When I stood—her arms around me—
Beside my gallant father's form,
Stronger, closer, she enwound me
As though she felt the coming storm.
It came—the storm of Reconstruction,
Which beat our hearts and hopes so low:
Fraud, injustice, wide destruction—
Could we stand the crushing blow?
Yes; old Mammy did not leave us,
She gave us help and strength and prayer.
She knew how deeply t'would bereave us
To lose her tender, loving care.

She would not go. Fierce looks were on her,
Because she loved and served us still;
Scornful words were hurled upon her,
But naught could bend her noble will.
She stayed by us in every trial,
She smiled, she wept with us alone.
With all an angel's self-denial
She made our sorrows all her own.

Dear old Soul! Her kind is going
Fast from this dull earth away—
Conceit and vanity are showing
A different type of Afric-clay.

Ah! I regret I'm not beside her
As life's tide is ebbing fast;
May every heavenly good betide her,
As she turns from us at last!
In Heaven her soul, so pure and loyal,
Will find supreme, eternal rest.
Among the truly great and royal,
Old Mammy'll shine among the best.

CHRISTMAS.

Was it "Peace, Good Will to men,"
Or "Peace to men of holy will,"
The angels sang that hour, when
At midnight—all the earth was still?

Can peace remain in hearts of pride?
Can peace exist with greed and scorn?
Was Herod not that boon denied
When ordering death to babes new-born?

Peace to all! Ah, no! not all
Can claim this blessing bright.
It could not be the angels' call
Was meant for sinners that glad night?

And yet it is a holy thought
That either message may be true.
It came—a sign from Heaven brought—
To show God's love and justice, too.

Then peace to men of holiest will!
And peace, good will to all!
Let Christian hearts re-echo still
The angels' loving Christmas call!

Religious.

THE SANCTUARY BELL.

Blest bell of the Altar! thou throbbest aloud,
Like a heart that is swelling with glad exultation,
As thou tellest the kneeling and awe-stricken crowd
Of that prophesied "Clean and most holy oblation,"
Which is offered to God with thanksgiving and
praise,

From the sun's rising beams to his last fading
rays.

Strike on our hearts, O most musical bell,
Making them ring with the purest emotion,
Touch all our souls with the magical spell,
Awaking the thrill of adoring devotion,
For often, alas! when we kneel at thy shrine
No tones from our hearts are as worthy as thine

When I listen again to thy musical note
My heart shall re-echo thy throbblings of love,
While the sighs of my spirit exultingly float
On thy tremulous chords to the angels above,
Who gather earth's sounds with a cherishing care,
Be they tones of a bell or a heart's humble prayer.

Blest bell of the Altar! O would that my days
Like thine had been spent in a worship unbroken,
Every sound from my lips-love's accent of praise,
Every sigh from my heart-love's tribute unspoken,
Then life would be fraught with a rapture so rare
Death only could add to the happiness there.

When thou throbbest one day for a heart that is
still,

For a soul that has bowed to the angel's decree,
At the sacrifice hour, with holiest thrill,

Let thy melody waken love's pleadings for me,
A Memento for one who has gone to that shore
Where ever the angels all trembling adore.

OUR ACOLYTES.

If Heaven could open to our view,
With all its glory, pomp and light,
How many a friend whom once we knew
Would stand before our raptured sight!

But what, methinks, should charm us most,
Would be those young men gathered there
Who scorned not here the lowly post
Of Acolyte on altar stair.

On earth they served by faith alone,
Yet nobly was their homage given;
They knew their Lord on altar-throne,
As now they see His face in heaven.

They learned true knighthood in their youth;
They held its laws above all price,
They walked with Innocence and Truth,
And thus they came to Paradise!

Too many of our youth to-day
Lead lives it breaks the heart to tell.
Why do they fly from virtue's way
To walk the very edge of hell?

They drop the mantle of their youth,
To ape the ways of wicked men—
They scoff at Purity and Truth,
To wallow in the foulest pen.

And some, perhaps, were altar boys,
True Acolytes in every thought,
Whose highest hopes, whose eager joys,
To serve within the altar court.

What force impelled their downward speed?
What demon sent those fiery darts
Which stirred to life that bitter seed,
Whose poison crept into their hearts?

Perhaps the first sad step was when
They deemed the altar service vain—
Beneath the dignity of men—
And would not bow the knee again.

“We will not serve,” the demons cried,
As fast they fled their Master’s sight.
Alas! the same infernal pride
Drags many a soul to endless night.

* * * * *

Give honor to the loyal band
Of Acolytes who girdle earth.
They give, like Ariel, at command,
To simple service noblest worth.

Where’er the Church her altar rears,
On native strand or foreign shore,
A band of Acolytes appears
Prepared to serve where they adore.

High is their aim, where'er they be,
Their service one of faith and love;
Their white robes in our sanctuary
Give us one glimpse of heaven above.

God grant them strength of heart and hand
To strike each vile temptation low,
And, like St. Michael, dauntless stand
With foot upon their vanquished foe.

I bow before our Acolytes,
I kiss their garments' very hem—
They wait, they watch—our altar knights—
As angels did in Bethlehem!

O, Thou, in whom all truth appears,
Teach them their service is sublime.
It reaches back a thousand years;
It will endure till end of time!

* * * * *

Among our bands, so leal and true,
Whose hearts have faith in things divine,
One Acolyte I hold in view
In whom rare qualities combine.

In busy life he bears his part,
He follows right, he loves the best,
Yet never does his loyal heart
Forget its sacred Sunday quest.

Before the shrine, with courtly grace,
He serves his Christ on bended knee;
The light of heaven is on his face,
Within his heart true chivalry!

O, may he be among the youth
Who ever seek the Holy Grail!
The cause of virtue, then, forsooth,
With such true knights can never fail!

MY BEADS.

My beads, my beads, my blessed beads!
My string of hope, my chain of prayer,
In all life's griefs, in all its needs
I find true consolation there.

Inspired by God these words were said:
"Henceforth all men shall call me blest."*
This prophecy of Nazareth's Maid
My beads forever more attest.

My beads, my beads, my blessed beads!

They are the page on which is cast
The radiance of the Saviour's deeds,
From cradle to the crown at last.

They voice His agony and pain;

They tell us of His wounded feet;

They whisper of that sacred stain

Which crept around Jerusalem's street!

My beads, my beads, my blessed beads!

I hold them in my pleading hands

High over all mere human creeds,

As witness of our Lord's commands—

He bade us all, from Calvary's Cross:

"Behold thy mother!"† Now our own,

We ask her help to bear His loss,

Her prayers to guide us to His throne.

My beads, my beads, my blessed beads!

Pure aspirations round them twine.

Each one, in meditation, feeds

My hungry soul with thoughts divine.

They are the teachers of the wise;
They are the Bible of the poor;
The blessed chain let from the skies
To draw men's souls to heaven's shore.

My beads, my beads, my blessed beads!
Sweet record of the Saviour's life,
They are the holy, living seeds
From which spring naught of hate or strife.

They are my messengers to God,
My heart's adoring, humble cry,
When I shall rest beneath the sod,
Within my hands they still must lie.

Beneath the dust my beads will be,
Mute witness to my soul's last plea—
"Blessed Mother, pray for me!"

American Bible Society: *Luke, chapter i, verse 48. †St. John, chapter xix, verse 27.

GONE TO GOD!

[Inscribed to the fond parents, on the occasion of their daughter's departure for a convent novitiate.]

O beautiful voyage! where Faith leads the way,
And Love lends his wings to the pilgrim's desire;
When the road, all unshadowed by sorrow of sin,
To the glory of God winds up higher--still higher!

Yes, gone to her God! not through portals of Death,
With a wreath on her brow and pale buds on her
breast!

Not gone in a sleep even Love cannot break,
So peaceful its smile and so changeless its rest!—

But gone to her God through the cloister's retreat,
Quitting the world for those bowers so fair,
And closing her heart to the voices of Earth,
To open it only to Him in her prayer.

Yes, gone to her God in her brightness and bloom,
Her brow still adorned with the blossoms of
youth:

She knew that Life's promises wither too soon,
But changeless and fadeless is God's living
truth!

Aye, gone! But such glory of Virtue is left,
It touches our hearts with a comforting grace;
It brightens to gladness the gloom of our tears,
And adorns with a halo her sweet vanished face!

Gone to her God! And yet always your own!
For as long as this life leaves its bloom on her
brow,
No claimant, save Him, can e'er sever the bonds
Binding you to your darling so tenderly now!

Yes, gone from a home where the beacons of joy
Ever burned with a radiance unchanging and
bright;
But her innocent heart yearned for sweeter repose
In that shrine where God's smile is the soul's
fairest light.

Aye, gone to her God! To her spousals of Love!
Pledging her heart to His service till death,
Knowing no widowhood ever can come
To dim with its tears the bright buds of her
wreath.

Always a bride!—no change and no sorrow
Can bring to her soul dark forebodings of ill:
Always beloved! Through years and through
changes
The charm of her bridal shall rest o'er her still!

Gone, gone to her God! Yet her memory with you
Shall comfort your hearts in their moments of
gloom,
While the influence breathed from her life of devo-
tion
Shall thrill all your lives as they glide to the
tomb!

Yes, gone to her God! O beautiful voyage,
Where Love lends his wings to the pilgrim's
desire,
And the road, all illumed by the bright angel-wings,
To the glory of God winds up higher and higher!

God's blessing, sweet voyager, ever be thine,
As thou journeyest on to His haven of rest;
May His smile cheer thy path through life's wear-
some way,
Till thou reachest thy goal in the land of the blest!

ASH WEDNESDAY.

A silver salver—a handful of dust,
Ashes of palms that were blessed in the spring,
A kneeling throng—and the words of trust,
Thrilling the heart, through the silence ring:
“Mother and maid, sire and youth,
Take to your souls the unchangeable truth—
“Memento Mori!”

Some there were in the years gone by,
Youthful and fair, stately and strong,
With careless heart and unheeding eye,
Kneeling at ease ‘mid the silent throng,
Who smiled as the ashes were laid on their brow—
Little they recked ’twould be heaped there now!
Memento Mori!

Mitres have fallen—crowns flitted away,
Over them all the dust gathers fast—
The strongest and weakest, the child of a day,
The sire whose years are full four score and past,
As their footsteps pass over the sun-lighted land,
May be chilled to the heart by Death’s pitiless
hand—

Memento Mori!

Dust! Dust! Why shrink from its touch?

We sprang from its folds in the dim long ago;
'Twill cover us all in the ages to be,
Heaped o'er our hearts when our poor heads lie
low—

Then scorn not the lesson these ashes impart,
"Unto dust" we return when life's forces depart.

Memento Mori!

Dust! Dust! It is scattered abroad,

Far over the earth, deep under the sea—
'Twill be gathered again on that beautiful shore
Where all of God's creatures assembled shall be
To receive from His hands these garments of clay
Which each spirit wore through Time's fleeting
day—

Memento Mori!

Garments of clay! Ah, what shall they be?

Shining with glory or darkened with shame?
Look well to it now—their fashion must be
As the deeds of our lives,—even the same.
Then if we would shape them to beauty and bloom'
Remember the warning that speaks from the
tomb:

"Memento Mori!"

List to the words, let them sink in your soul,
More permanent there than the dust on your
brow;
Not for your sorrow, not for your dole
Are these terrible words breathed over you
now—
This warning from man, this dust from the sod,
May guide you through life, may uplift you to
God! *Memento Mori!*

PALM SUNDAY.

Palms for the surging people
Who throng their Lord to greet,
Spreading green boughs before him,
Their garments 'neath his feet;
While voices of young children
Cry out with loud acclaim:
“Blessed is he who cometh
In Jehovah's mighty name!”

Palms symbol forth his victory
Won o'er the prince of death,
While the emblem of his mercy
Is the Olive's fragrant breath—

Green palms and olive branches,
We, too, must bear to-day,
Following with glad hosannas
Where e're he leads the way.

Ah! Soon upon the morrow,
The palms will change to thorns,
And the blessing turn to cursing
Before the morning dawns!
His feet, that press the blossoms,
Flung out by children's hands,
Must follow, weak and weary,
A soldier's fierce commands.

The men who spread their garments
To smooth his rugged road,
On his bruised and bleeding shoulders
Will cast a cruel load!
The voices that proclaim him
All Israel's Holy King,
With jeers of fearful meaning,
Through Jerusalem will ring!

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This life is but a journey
Where pleasures throng our way—
Its flowers are few and fading,
Its thorns remain for aye.
Faith's palms we strew before us,
And mercy's robes we wear,
But the Cross our Master carried
Is the burden we must bear.

We must follow in his footsteps,
Though our feet grow weary, sore;
He has traced the only pathway
Leading straight to heaven's door
Would we enter at its portals,
We must press the thorns of pain,
But within its bowers of beauty,
We may wear the palm again!

THE LAST WORDS OF GOETHE.

(*Delta*, Nov. 4, 1855.)

“Let the light enter,” said the dying poet,
For Death's cold seal was on his eyes;
“Let the light enter,” for the heavenly portals
Were dim between him and the skies.

“Let the light enter,” for his mind was darkened,
Never ray from heaven shone there,
And yet unconsciously his pale lips muttered
At once an order and a prayer.

“Let the light enter,” for his soul was nearing
The borders of the land ignored;
Darkness was deeper—terrified and trembling,
“Let the light enter,” he implored.

“Let the light enter,” that was mist and darkness
Which once my soul mistook for light;
But the strange shadows lengthening ever round me,
Have nothing in them fair or bright.”

He knew not that the golden sunlight, streaming
Through the wide windows by his bed,
Warmed the damp dew upon his forehead standing
And made a halo round his head.

Darkness was only in the mind’s proud temple,
Unlighted by a smile from Grace,
Whose lamp alone can light the soul departing,
And make Death wear a radiant face.

“Let the light enter,” still the soul entreating,
Asked for the Faith it had not known;
And the last spark of life left dimly burning,
For one brief moment brightly shone,

As the dying Atheist, weak and fearing,
All his powers seemed to center,
While from his lips the spirit’s cry came slowly,
“Let the light, the bright light enter.”

It was too late: no voice of loving mercy,
Ere passed his spirit into night,
Whispered amid the darkness hanging o’er him
The blessed words, “Let there be light!”

And Goethe, with his spirit blind and erring,
Passed out to seek the unknown shore;
But tidings of the unillumined vessel
Where heard by mortals nevermore!

“COULD YOU NOT WATCH ONE HOUR
WITH ME?”

I have watched for hours, dear Master!

Near the shores of Pleasure's sea,
Wooing every sparkling ripple
Sent by Folly's hand to me.

I have watched for hours, dear Master!

Watched with eager hope and fear,
The shifting clouds that fickle Fortune
Held above me, far or near.

I have watched—Alas, dear Master!

With streaming eyes I tell thee this—
Watched with vile and foolish yearning
To hear th' envenomed serpent's hiss.

Yet near the garden of Thy sorrow,

Near that scene of love divine—
Where Thy heart—o'erflowing chalice,—
Poured oblation forth like wine,—

There I waited not, dear Master,

Nor watched one passing hour with Thee,
But took my rest, while Thou wert struggling
With Death's appalling gloom, for me!

“Could you not watch?” Ah, tender Master!

My heart seems broken now with pain,

For through each hour of rest or labor
I hear that plaintive, sad refrain.
“One hour with me?” Dear Lord! how gladly
Would I take the hours now past,
At Thy feet, with tears and pleading,
Spend them all, from first to last.
O, would that voice, so full of mercy,
Had sooner reached this heart of mine,
Not one poor hour—my Lord and Master!
But all of life had then been thine!

THE EASTER MOON.

[The date of Easter is determined by the moon. It is always the first Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal Equinox.]

High in the realms of boundless space,
The vernal moon in silent glory,
Speeds onward to her destined place
To tell again the sacred story
Which gives to man in every clime,
That Day of days,—the Eastern time.

Bright Easter Moon! On thee we gaze
 With hearts replete with glad emotion.
We know thee well—we mark each phase,
 We count thy spells on sea and ocean;
But only now thy presence brings
 The thought of Him, the King of Kings!

O blessed moon! thy silvery light
 Shone round His cold sepulchral Stone,
When Roman guards through one dread night,
 Watched at their post that power unknown,
Which flashing on them as they lay,
 Gave man his hope,—an Easter day!

O glorious Moon! thy records stand,
 Though many thousand years have fled,
Thou'rt still the index of His hand
 Who rules the Living and the Dead.
And thine the mission all sublime,
 To link Eternity—with Time.

O happy Moon! we watch thy way
 Across the starry courts of heaven,
As fast thou journeyest towards the Day
 When Light and Truth to man are given,
And Nature's self, from trance of gloom,
 Breathes verdant worship at His tomb.

O happy Moon! thy goal is won.
 The Easter Feast in glory shines;
Rejoicing in thy mission done,
 Thou glidest o'er thy circling lines,
Content that thou each year, wilt bring
 The self same message from the King.

OUR CHOIRS.

Asking Silence at the Consecration and Elevation.

O ye, who sing of things divine,
Where holy thoughts and words combine,
 To lift our souls on wings of song—
Should it not be your heart's desire
To make God's worship ever higher,
 Since all its notes to him belong?

Yet 'tis not so—a human pride,
Alas, it cannot be denied!

Is blended with each choral strain.
The hymns are sung for human praise,
The songs are sung in wordly ways,
That bring no balm to souls in pain.

Methinks the Choir's loudest strain,
Its most impassioned, fierce refrain,
Is just when earthly sounds should cease,
When souls could prove their faith sincere
In him whose presence is so near,
The hidden Lord, the Prince of Peace!

When comes the Consecration hour—
That act of God's infinite power
No human mind can understand;—
The Choir then should not be heard,
Nor note, nor chord, nor vocal word—
Silence our very souls demand.

The sacred melody of prayer,
Floating from out the altar there,
Can scarcely reach the heart or ear.
The Choir sings with wild affright,
Like combatants on fields of fight,
Filling our souls with wondering fear.

Then when the Host is lifted high,
How join the seraphs in the sky
 Fitly this mystery to adore?
Only by silence—born of faith—
Deep as the awful hush of death,
 While reverence holds us evermore.

The Choir? It makes a fresh attack,
Draws swords to drive each foeman back,
 And shouts aloud its victory!
The altar-bell its warning rings;
It is not heard! The Choir sings!
 Alas, O Faith! O Piety!

Silence? No creed can copy this.
Its sacred meaning all must miss
 Until the light on them shall shine.
When speaks the One on Calvary's hill,
All earthy voices should be still—
 So souls may hear the Voice Divine!

Yes, silence has a wondrous power.
'Tis adoration's perfect flower,—
 Its fragrance not of earth or time.
Though song and music have their parts,
They cannot show the faith in hearts
 As does a silence all sublime!

Still sings the Choir—the moments pass,
 Those sacred moments of the Mass,
 And then it rests—its fury o'er!
 No thought of worship in the heart—
 In silent prayer to bear no part—
 To sing is theirs—and nothing more!

* * * * *

Strangers stroll in to hear the score,
 And then to wonder more and more,
 As in the priest's uplifted hand
 The Sacred Species strangely gleam;—
 While louder flows that vocal stream,
 Oblivious to the bell's command.

“Mere form! Mere mummary all!” they say,
 “No one believes in this to-day,
 Or signs of worship would appear!”
 Ah! let a sudden silence thrill,
 As when Christ bade the waves be still,
 Then all might feel that God is near.

If I could urge one single Choir
 To make its service nobler, highter,
 Than mere display of vocal art;—
 If I could make it know and feel
 That worship should the truth reveal
 'Twould comfort many a doubting heart.

It is the Choir! Alas, the fact!—
That weakens faith. Its members act
 As though God's truth from earth had fled.
The Presence real whom we adore,
Is scorned, is slighted, more and more,
 And worship made a farce instead!

Oh, give us at the sacred time
That sudden silence more sublime
 Than word, or song, or music vast.
Give us the silence that we prize,—
Or else the very stones may rise,
 And hurl reproach at us at last!







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